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Experts Available for Pope's Visit

03.18.2008 | Faculty, Catholic, Campus and Community

Faculty experts at the University of Dayton, one of the top-10 Catholic universities in the U.S. and Ohio's largest private university, looked ahead to Pope Benedict XVI's upcoming visit to the U.S. and compiled their thoughts on what will be the most important issues around his April 15-20 visit.

These nationally recognized faculty are available for media interviews on a range of topics.

Comparison of John Paul II and Benedict XVI; Sex Abuse Crisis; Young Catholics

William Portier, religious studies professor and Mary Ann Spearin Chair of Catholic Theology, is an expert on Catholic theology, U.S. Catholic history and Catholic higher education. He has written or edited several books, and contributed nearly 100 articles and reviews. He has been frequently quoted and interviewed by the national press on the U.S. Catholic Church, evangelical Catholicism, church culture and young Catholics. Contact him at 937-229-4435 or william.portier@notes.udayton.edu. (url: william.portier@notes.udayton.edu.)

On the sex abuse crisis:

"The Vatican has been too silent on the sex abuse scandal. People are outraged by it, and the pope needs to say it's a shame, he needs to say extreme things about it, he needs to do penance for it."

U.S. Catholic Life and Thought

Sandra Yocum-Mize, professor and chair of the Department of Religious Studies, is a well-known writer and lecturer nationally on U.S. Catholic life and thought. She has been quoted by *CNN*, *USA Today*, *the Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *Our Sunday Visitor*, *Cox News Service*, *The Detroit News*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Contact her at 937-229-4321 or mizes@udayton.edu. (url: mizes@udayton.edu.)

On how the church has changed since Pope John Paul II:

"Pope Benedict XVI will see a U.S. Catholic Church in some ways in crisis. The church is still facing fallout from the sexual abuse scandal, many parishes are closing, the number of priests continues to diminish and there is a growth of large suburban churches."

Catholic Theology; The Catholic Church

Dennis Doyle, religious studies professor, is an expert in Catholic theology and the Church. He has been interviewed by several media outlets, including the Associated Press, *Newsday*, *New York Post*, *L.A. Times*, *Boston Herald* and the Catholic News Service. Contact him at 937-229-4219 or dennis.doyle@notes.udayton.edu. (url: dennis.doyle@notes.udayton.edu.)

On the pope's view of church and state:

"Pope Benedict XVI strongly endorses a basic separation of church and state, but he believes that the Church should have a strong influence on the culture. For example, he thinks that people of faith should work together to pass laws against abortion on the basis of a reason that is informed by faith. He opposes cultural and moral relativism and thinks that basic truths are knowable. He will emphasize that faith should be linked with peace and should detach itself from violence."

Catholic Higher Education

Daniel J. Curran, president of the University of Dayton, will be among the leaders in Catholic higher education who will meet Pope Benedict XVI April 17. Curran, who holds a doctorate in sociology, is the first lay president in the 158-year history of the university. He has special interests in economic development, high-tech research and international issues as well as a strong commitment to diversity and social justice. To contact him, call Cilla Shindell in the office of university communications at 937-229-3241 or 937-367-2889.

On Catholic higher education:

"A Catholic university must be a force for social change. As a community of learners and educators, we must analyze the causes of social injustice and educate professionals with a conscience."

U.S. Catholic Culture; Catholic Higher Education

Una Cadegan, history professor, is an expert on the changing perception of Catholicism in the United States, and the history of U.S. Catholic print culture. She is also an expert on Catholic higher education and the Catholic intellectual tradition. She has contributed op-eds to the local press and done local radio and television interviews following major news events, including the Oklahoma City bombing and the 2004 presidential race. Contact her at 937-229-3468 or una.cadegan@notes.udayton.edu. (url: una.cadegan@notes.udayton.edu.)

On the pope's message for America:

"The pope doesn't come here to make a comment on the presidential elections or to make social commentary, he comes here as a pastor, to preach. He will preach about God's love and that peace is better than war."

On the Iraq War:

"The unique destructiveness of modern warfare makes it almost indefensible even within the tradition of Christian just war theory, and popes have been speaking out increasingly strongly about non-violent means of resolving conflict, the importance of diplomacy, and the need to seek justice as a way of cultivating lasting peace." — Una Cadegan, history professor.

Pope Benedict XVI and Cultural Issues; Catholic Theology; Climate Change

Vincent Miller, visiting professor of theology, is an expert on religion and pop culture, consumer culture, the effects of globalization on religious faith and practice and religion and politics. He is author of *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*, several academic articles and an op-ed for the *Washington Post* "On Faith" blog. Contact him at 937-229-4321 or millervi@notes.udayton.edu.

On pope's public persona:

"American Catholics know that Benedict's the pope, but they still don't know who he is and what he's like. This visit will help them decide. Unlike John Paul II, Benedict is suspicious of the media focus on personality, and he doesn't want a 'rock star' papacy. Yet, he wants to get his message across in a media-saturated world."

On climate change:

"Benedict's taken the Vatican carbon-neutral, he's in Al Gore land on that. He will appeal to youth, because Millennials are desperate to have religious leaders take up the cause of environmental stewardship."

Pope Benedict's Persona and Theology

The Rev. Johann Roten S.M., director of the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute, is an internationally recognized expert on Mary, the mother of Jesus, and cultural practices around the world that venerate her. A former student of Pope Benedict XVI, Roten can comment on the pope's theological thinking. Contact him at 937-229-4257 or johann.roten@notes.udayton.edu. (url: johann.roten@notes.udayton.edu.)

On the pope:

"Benedict XVI, his person and mission as pope, is an invitation to rediscover the basics of the Christian message: love, hope and faith. A life-long champion of the totality of the Christian heritage, the theologian-pope points to Jesus Christ as the living synthesis of Christian life. Pilgrim and pastor he hails the Eucharist as the source of Christian pilgrimage."

American Protestant Perspective; Capital Punishment

Bill Trollinger, history professor and director of the religious studies graduate program, is an expert on Protestantism in 19th and 20th century America, with a focus on evangelicalism, fundamentalism and print culture. He has written several articles on these topics for academic journals and books and has been interviewed by TV, radio and newspaper outlets including *Christian Century* and *The Journal News* (White Plains, N.Y.) Contact him at 937-229-4650 or trolliwv@notes.udayton.edu. (url: trolliwv@notes.udayton.edu.)

On Protestant reaction to pope's visit:

"There has been a sea change in American Protestantism; there is simply not the depth of anti-Catholicism there used to be. But anti-Catholicism certainly has not disappeared. More than this, there is the tendency, especially among evangelicals, to evaluate Catholic leaders — including the pope — in light of their own interests, and even recast these leaders in their own image."

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.